

the financial implications? What are the health care implications? What else should we do?

But I am confident that being for a consumer's right to know is the right thing to do here. And I am confident—I will say again—I am confident that we can find a way to preserve the Medicare program in a way that gives you more options, keeps it affordable, and doesn't divide it into a two-tier system where the elderly in our country who happen to be the oldest or the poorest or the sickest wind up getting the short end of the health care stick. I don't think any one of you want that, and I'm going to do my best to avoid that. We can do what we need to do.

All of this is a way of building a bridge to the future. I believe that we have to make it possible—let me say again—for families across the generations to succeed at home and at work, to honor the obligations to parents and children and still be successful in the workplace and as citizens. I believe we can do that. I believe

we can do it if we build the right kind of bridge to the future, including the health care reforms I have discussed today. And I hope that every one of you will help me and yourselves and your children to build that bridge.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. at the Sunrise Musical Theater. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Steve Effman of Sunrise; Mayor Nancy Graham of West Palm Beach; Sheriff Ron Cochran of Broward County; Jack and Janet Boyle, owners, Sunrise Musical Theater; Sallie A. Richardville, secretary-treasurer, Broward AFL-CIO, who introduced the President; and Ms. Richardville's mother, Edith B. Tuten, daughter, Mary K. Leake, and granddaughter, Nicole Washburn. The Executive order establishing the Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks to the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., in Orlando, Florida *September 6, 1996*

The President. Thank you. Thank you.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you. Dr. Lyons, thank you for your support. Thank you for exciting the crowd here.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you, thank you. Thank you, Dr. Lyons. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for making me feel so very, very welcome. To Mrs. Lyons and General Secretary Cooper; Mr. Lowery; Dr. Glover, Mrs. Hickson, thank you for your work on this teenage alliance; to your guests and my friends Bishop Graves and Bishop Brown; to Governor Chiles and Congresswoman Brown and Congressman Conyers. Congressman Conyers, thank you especially for your leadership in the fight against the church burnings. To Congressman Fauntroy and my good friend Mayor Webb.

Governor Chiles and I have had a good time in Florida the last 2 days, although I think we can all certify it's still summertime down here.

[*Laughter*] I was thinking about coming into this meeting today, and I was thinking, I don't know how we could be so close to heaven and it still be so hot. [*Laughter*]

I know you've had a lot of distinguished speakers before me at this podium—my good friends Reverend Andrew Young and Reverend Jesse Jackson. I thank Reverend Jackson for what he said yesterday about his back-to-school program, which I heartily endorse, getting the parents to take the children to school, meet their children's teachers, receive report cards, turn the television off, and read to the kids. That's a pretty good program. I thank him for that and for his idea about going to the juvenile system and saving our young people before they get in trouble. I thank him for that, and I know you do.

I'd also like to say how very moved I was by Pat Brooks' singing today. It was magnificent, and I thank her for that. I was thinking that is truly a gift from God, and I'm glad she shared it with us today.

I'm glad to be back with you. I have a lot of friends in this audience. My friends from Arkansas, Dr. James, Dr. O'Neal, Dr. Jones, Reverend Keaton, Reverend Barnes—I've seen a few of them here. I'm sure there are more here from home.

I thank your former president, Dr. Jemison, for his long friendship. And my good friend John Modest Miles back there, from Kansas City—I'm going to be in his town next Tuesday. Reverend Bifford—so many others who are here—I thank you all for many, many, many years of friendship and partnership.

I'm glad to be in Orlando, and I was thinking today about 2 years ago when we were together in New Orleans. We talked then about what we could do to build the kingdom of God here on Earth. I want to look at the progress we have made since then and about what we have to do together.

First, let me just say I'm sorry I was late today but I was getting an update on the hurricane, and I'd like to share it with you and ask for you to keep those people in your prayers. The people of the Carolinas are working to cope with the effects of Hurricane Fran. Eleven people have died. They and their families must be in our prayers.

Today I am declaring a major disaster in the State of North Carolina. Our Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, James Lee Witt, is on his way to the Carolinas even as we are here. We're going to do everything we can to help the people of North Carolina and South Carolina in this difficult time. But again, I say to you here in Florida, those of you who went through Hurricane Andrew know what it's like. We need to be praying for those people and supporting them. And there are, doubtless, people here from those two States. In addition to the hurricane, there has been and will be more rain, and there's a lot to do.

You are people of faith. And today we need that faith more than ever. The Scripture says that "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things unseen." And we have seen, all of us in our own life, that if we have faith, we can make real and we can see those things that we hope for, that we were convicted about.

That is why you teach your children right from wrong, why you pass on the values that you believe in, in frequently tough surroundings, why we try to build a better future, building

strong families, strong communities, strong lives. This church has done that in the toughest of times.

The Scripture commands us in Nehemiah to rise up and build and strengthen our hands for the good work. Today I ask your help in building that bridge to the 21st century I have been talking about all across America, a bridge that is wide enough and strong enough to carry every American across.

Over the past 2 weeks I have taken a train ride and then a bus ride with my wife, my daughter, the Vice President, and Mrs. Gore through America's heartland. In between, we had a pretty good convention in Chicago. I went on this trip to say to the American people we are on the right track to the 21st century, but I also wanted to look into the eyes, the hearts, the faces of the people for whom I have worked and fought for the last 4 years. Let me assure you, we are not taking anyone or anyone's vote for granted, and we know the only poll that counts is the one they take on November 5th. I ask you to remember that and help others remember it as well.

But think about the progress we have made together. Four years ago we had a skyrocketing deficit, unemployment at nearly 8 percent. New jobs were scarce; wages were stagnant. I came to this office with a simple strategy: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a place for everyone in our American community, stronger and more united.

Look at the results: Almost 4½ million new homeowners, the growth of homeowners who are African-American exceeding the national average; record number of new small businesses and record number of businesses owned by minorities and women; the deficit down 60 percent, going down in each of our 4 years for the first time since before the Civil War that has happened; crime down for 4 years; 1.8 million fewer people on the welfare rolls than the day I took the oath of office; a 40 percent increase in child support collections; an increase in the minimum wage for 10 million Americans coming October 1st; 12 million Americans taking some time off when their babies are born or their parents are sick without losing their jobs because of the family leave law; 15 million Americans getting a tax cut, the hardest working, hardest pressed Americans; 40 million Americans having their pensions protected because of actions that have been taken; health care reform

that can help 25 million Americans because it says you can't lose your health insurance anymore just because you change jobs, and you can't be denied it just because someone in your family has been sick.

And we had more good news today. According to the latest economic statistics, our economy is growing steady and strong, creating another 250,000 jobs in August—just the latest evidence—strong growth, the highest consumer confidence in years. Since I became President, our country has created 10½ million new jobs; unemployment has dropped to its lowest level in 7½ years. The American economy, my fellow Americans, is on the right track, and we need to keep it going in that direction.

We have honored a commitment to provide an administration that looks like America and is committed to excellence. Forty-two African-Americans have been nominated to the Federal court bench since I became President. And our nominees as a whole have the highest ratings from the American Bar Association of any administration since the ratings began. You can have excellence and diversity. You can do that, and we are committed to it.

Diversity and excellence has also been a hallmark of my Cabinet and our other administration appointees. We were blessed with the service of my great friend and the best friend American business and American working people ever had in the Commerce Department, Commerce Secretary Ron Brown. For the first time, three of the top staffers in the White House are African-American.

Now, that is a good start, but we have to do more. We have to make sure that all Americans have a chance to be a part of the prosperity and the possibility we are creating for the 21st century. Every American who is responsible should have the opportunity to succeed, to live out their dreams, to live up to the fullest of their God-given potential. And that is the great challenge we face today. I want to build a bridge to the 21st century where every single American has a chance to live up to their God-given potential.

Nothing is more important to that, as Dr. Lyons said, than education. In the last 4 years we have expanded Head Start, helped our schools shrink class size, supported new, smaller charter schools to help provide excellent educational opportunities, and we now know that an enormous percentage of the students in them are minority students and poor students.

We've expanded antidrug education and prevention programs, imposed a zero tolerance for guns, opened the doors to college wider than ever with more scholarships and a lower cost college loan program. We have created the national service program, which has provided opportunities for 50,000 young people to serve in their communities, solving problems and earning money for college.

Now we must do more. I want that bridge to the 21st century to be one where computers are as much of the part of the classroom as blackboards, where highly trained teachers expect, demand, and get peak performance from all of our students, where every 8-year-old can point to a book and say, "I read it all by myself."

I want us to build a bridge to the 21st century which makes at least 2 years of college as universal as a high school education is today. I propose a \$1,500 tuition tax credit, a HOPE scholarship to make the typical community college available to every single American, a refundable tax credit to cover the costs of tuition. I believe we should give our families a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of any education after high school, 4 years of college and graduate school, whatever it takes. This kind of investment would be good for America. I believe we should let families save in an IRA, an individual retirement account, and withdraw from it, if necessary, to pay for an education without any penalty.

But we must do more. Forty percent of our 8-year-olds cannot read as well as they should. But every child—every child should be able to read on his or her own by the third grade. I propose to send 30,000 reading specialists into our communities to work with volunteers, to mobilize an army of volunteers with the help of our young AmeriCorps people, with the help of college students on work-study, to mobilize up to one million tutors so that every single child in this country who needs a tutor can get one, so that by the time all of our children are 8 they can read on their own. They can't learn the rest of the way unless they can read young.

I want to connect every classroom and library in every school in America to the information superhighway by the year 2000, not just computers and trained teachers but a connection to the vast array of knowledge that is now available

at the fingertips of anyone who knows how to use it.

Think of what this means, my fellow Americans. If we can do this it means that, for the first time in the entire history of the United States, children in the poorest rural classroom, in the remotest area of America, children in the poorest inner-city classrooms, in the most isolated parts of America, for the first time will have access to the same information in the same way at the same level of quality as the children in the richest schools in America. This will democratize education in a way we have never done before ever in our history.

I want the United States Government to help our local school districts for the first time in helping to rebuild dilapidated schools and build new ones in the areas that are growing and do not have the resources to do it on their own. We have never done this, but I see over and over and over again as the largest class of students in American history start school this year, you cannot expect these children to learn if they are in circumstances that are absolutely deplorable. And if local people will do their part to do more, we will help them to do more so that we can build the schools of the 21st century.

Now, if we do these things, every 8-year-old will be able to read, every 12-year-old will be able to log in on the Internet, every 18-year-old will be able to go to college. That's a bridge worth building. Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? [*Applause*]

I want to build a bridge to the 21st century in which all Americans take personal responsibility for themselves and their families and their communities and for our country. I want every child to grow up in a community where work is the standard, where earning a paycheck is a thing of pride. The welfare reform law I signed gives millions of Americans a chance, but not a certainty, to have that new kind of beginning.

We fought hard to keep the guarantees of health care, school lunches, nutrition and child care for children and families. But this new law also says, from now on, able-bodied people must work for the income check.

Now, I strongly believe that. I was proud and I was proud to see you clapping when I said the welfare rolls were smaller by 1.8 million in the last 4 years. A strong economy helped that to happen. But the experiments, the work

we've been doing with people like Governor Chiles to help people move from welfare to work, has also helped.

So I say to you, it's all very well for the Congress or the Governors to say, okay, we have a new system and everybody who is able-bodied has to work, but to make that morally defensible and practically possible, there has to be work for those people to do.

I want to tell you about some of the things we are doing to help create more work in the inner cities, in other poor areas, for people on welfare, for single, unemployed men who depend upon food stamps but don't have welfare and can't find jobs. Under this law, every State—when it becomes effective, every State in the country can say to any employer, any private sector business, any non-profit organization, and any church, anybody that employs people—now the State can say, “If you will hire somebody off welfare, we'll give you the welfare check as a supplement for the wages and the training.”

It means, folks, when you go back home, your church could receive a person's welfare check and add to it only a modest amount of money to make a living wage and to take some time to train people and bring their children into the church and make sure their children are all right and give them a home and a family.

Will you do that? Will you go home and consider hiring somebody from welfare to work if your State will give you some money to help you do it? I want every pastor in this audience to think about it. Just think about it. If every church in America hired one person off welfare, if every church in America could get some help to do that, it would set an example that would require the business community to follow, that would require charitable and other nonprofit organizations to follow. We cannot create a Government jobs program big enough to solve this whole thing, but if everybody did it one by one, we could do this job. We could give those folks the work we promised and expect the responsibility we ask in that law. And I hope you will consider doing that. You could make all the difference in the world.

We must do more for businesses. I propose to give an extra tax credit for people who hire folks off welfare. I propose to give private job placement firms, who do a good job of placing other people, funds if they place people from welfare to work and they stay there.

I want to have 3 times as many empowerment zones as the ones we now have in cities like Chicago and New York and Baltimore and Kansas City. I want to have 3 times as many of those, because I have seen in Detroit alone, \$2 billion in private section investment poured into inner-city Detroit. The unemployment rate in 3 years dropped from 8½ percent to under 4 percent. We can bring jobs back to the inner city when business understands that the greatest market for American business are people in America who are underemployed and unemployed in places that need new investment. I hope you will support that approach as well.

I propose to create more community development banks, 3 times as many empowerment zones. I propose an investment fund to help our cities put welfare recipients to work immediately, repairing schools, making their neighborhoods clean and safer. We can do this, but we're all going to have to work at it. And I want you to help me build that bridge to the 21st century that says if we tell you you have to work, we're going to make sure you have work to do. There's plenty to do in this country, we just have to organize it so we can all do it together. I want you to help me do that.

I want to build a bridge to the 21st century in which all Americans live in strong, healthy communities. If you will give us 4 more years, we'll clean up two-thirds of the toxic waste sites that are still out there so our children can grow up in every community next to parks, not poison. It's wrong that 10 million children live within 4 miles of toxic waste sites, and we can change it. We want to clean up the ones that blot our urban centers, called brownfields. We can do that, create more jobs in the cities, attract more business and development by cleaning the environment.

I want to build a bridge to the 21st century where we have stronger families and we help our parents to raise their children and to protect them. Proverbs says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." That is why we passed the Family and Medical Leave Act and why we want to expand it; why we have done our best to stop the advertising, marketing, and sales of cigarettes to children; why we are giving parents the V-chip to help them screen out inappropriate television shows; why we are helping parents and communities to give our young people both discipline and values through sup-

porting communities who decide on their own to have curfew policies, tougher truancy laws, school uniform programs.

All these things are our way of saying to communities and parents, we want to help you do the job that we know you want to do. We want people to succeed at home and at work. If America cannot succeed at home and at work, and do both, America cannot succeed.

Finally, let me say, I know here above all I am preaching to the choir, but I want you to help me build a bridge to the 21st century that can only be built by all of us together. Nothing we do will matter if we cannot heal the divisions and bigotry that still crop up in this country from time to time.

That is why I have said on affirmative action, we ought to make it better, we should mend it, but it's not time to end it. That is why I put the full force of my office behind the effort to stop the rash of church burnings that have plagued us in recent months. And let me say, I know, as church people and as Americans, you feel exactly the same way whenever you see a white church burned, a synagogue defaced, or an Islamic center destroyed. It's wrong for everybody. It's wrong for everybody.

If you look around the world, folks, it's amazing how much time I have to spend as your President trying to get other people to lay down their hatreds. And what are these hatreds rooted in—in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, in Bosnia, in Rwanda and Burundi? What are they rooted in? Religious, racial, ethnic, tribal hatreds. People get in the habit of living so that they define themselves and how good they are by how bad their neighbors are, how holy they are in their faith by how unholy people who have another faith are, how righteous they are by how evil people who are different are. And it is a miserable way to live. It is self defeating.

Why in the wide world people would tear up that beautiful little country of Bosnia? Yes, they have different religions and, yes, they have different ethnic labels, but the truth is, biologically they're not different. It is a product of historical accident. For decades, they lived in peace together. Sarajevo, one of the beautiful cities in the world—why do they keep doing this? What is it in the human heart that we have to purge? How wise were our Founders not to make America a place where you had to do anything but believe in the values of the

Constitution. How wise was Thomas Jefferson to know that the great hypocrisy in our founding was slavery when he said, "I tremble—when I think of slavery, I tremble to think that God is just."

And now we are struggling not only to deal with the relationships between African-Americans and the majority community, with all of the progress we've made in over 200 years, but also the fact that the fastest growing minority in America are the Hispanic-Americans; the fact that we had 197 nations represented at the Olympics—in our largest county, Los Angeles County, there are people from 150 of those places, in only one American county.

Now, if you look at the world we are living in and the one toward which we are going, if we can all get along together, that's going to be the greatest asset any country in the world has. We have folks here from everywhere.

I gave a speech a few years ago to one of the California State University campuses in Los Angeles, and there were people in the student body in one school from 122 different national, racial, and ethnic groups, in one school. That is an enormous asset in a global world, where we're all being drawn closer together.

On the other hand, if we fall into the trap that is strangling country after country after country and think the only way we can amount to something, the only way we can be somebody is to find somebody else to look down on, we're in for big trouble because we've got more of that than any country in the world does—all of this difference.

So I say to you, no people in this country have suffered more or longer than African-Americans from discrimination, but you know you will never and can never become what you wish to be by returning that in kind. That is the lesson you must teach others. That's why I react so strongly to these church burnings, because I see how other countries have been consumed.

I see how far we've come in my own lifetime. I see that bright, shining future out there where there will be more possibilities for our children to do more things than ever before. In 10 years, our children will be doing jobs that have not

been invented yet. They will be doing work that has not been imagined yet. I just approved a joint venture with IBM to develop a supercomputer within the next couple of years that will be able to do more calculations in a second than you can go home and pick up a pocket calculator and do in 30,000 years. That's how much change is going on. It's got to be a good thing for America.

And it can only be a good thing if we go forward together—if we say, "If you believe in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and you're willing to show up and do right tomorrow, you're my kind of American. I don't care what your race is; I don't care what your religion is; I don't care where you started out in life. We're going to join arm in arm and go across that bridge together." Will you help me build that bridge to the 21st century? [*Applause*]

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:32 a.m. at the Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., officers Henry J. Lyons, president, and his wife, Deborah, Roscoe D. Cooper, Jr., general secretary, T.J. Jemison, past president, John Modest Miles, government affairs liaison, and Richard Bifford, secretary; John Lowery, chief executive officer, Revelation Corp.; Clarence Glover, president, and Sandra Hickson, executive vice president, Teens Alliance With Clergy; William H. Graves, presiding bishop, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; E. Lynn Brown, presiding bishop, 9th Episcopal District, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church; Gov. Lawton Chiles of Florida; Mayor Wellington Webb of Denver, CO; Andrew Young, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations; Jesse L. Jackson, civil rights leader; P.J. James, president, and T.W. Barnes, vice president at large, Consolidated Missionary Baptist State Convention; D.L. O'Neal, president, and O.C. Jones, former president, Regular Arkansas Missionary Baptist State Convention; and W.T. Keaton, president, Arkansas Baptist College. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.